

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 0361

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CB, TH

SUBJECT: CONDITIONS AND RESISTANCE INSIDE CAMBODIA

REF: A. BANGKOK 24924; B. 6 895 0371 75; 6 895 0376 75;

6 895 0379 75.

SUMMARY: LOCAL THAI POLITICAL FIGURE, APPEALING FOR U.S.
SUPPORT FOR CAMBODIAN RESISTANCE, RECOUNTS OBSERVATIONS BASED
UPON TRAVELS INTO CAMBODIA. END SUMMARY.

1. FORMER DEPUTY SIN DUSITSIN FROM SURIN, AN ETHNIC CAMBODIAN,
VISITED EMBASSY JANUARY 5 TO DISCUSS SITUATION INSIDE CAMBODIA
AND TO REQUEST U.S. ASSISTANCE IN RETAKING CONTROL. SIN SAID
HE ACTS AS ADVISER TO GRTUP OF TEN CAMBODIANS NOW LIVING IN
THAILAND WHO WISH TO RESTORE NON-COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT IN THEIR
COUNTRY. THEY REPORTEDLY SERVE AS LIAISON FOR OTHERS JUST
INSIDE CAMBODIA. SIN CLAIMED HE IS INVOLVED ONLY BECAUSE HE
IS GROWING OLDER AND HAS NOTHING TO LOSE IN TRYING TO WORK
FOR GOOD OF HIS PEOPLE.

2. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS. DRESSED AS A KC, SUBJECT HAS
TRAVELLED INSIDE CAMBODIA IN NOVEMBER (ODDAR MEANCHEY) AND
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DECEMBER, RETURNING FROM HIS LAST TRIP IN FOREST ALONG

NORTHERN PREAH VIHEAR PROVINCE ON OR ABOUT NEW YEAR'S DAY. THROUGH HIS TRAVELS AND THOSE OF FRIENDS, HE SEEMS TO HAVE A FEEL FOR INTERNAL CAMBODIAN SITUATION, PARTICULARLY IN NORTHWESTERN AND NORTH-CENTRAL PARTS. FIRST, HE SAID RICE HARVEST WAS GENERALLY EXCELLENT THIS YEAR, "EVEN BETTER THAN IN THAILAND". FARMERS DO NOT GET TO KEEP THEIR OWN PRODUCTION BUT ARE AT LEAST RATIONED AN AMOUNT ADEQUATE FOR SURVIVAL. SINCE THERE IS NO MONEY, PERSONS IN NEED OF SALT OR OTHER ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES CAN OBTAIN THEM (IF AVAILABLE) FROM STATE-OPERATED DEPOTS. CITING SAMRONG AND SIEM REAP AS EXAMPLES, SIN SAID COMMON FEATURE OF TOWNS IS VIRTUAL DEPOPULATION EXCEPT FOR KC FORCES. EVERYONE REMAINS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, HE ADDED.

3. HARSHNESS OF LIFE. SOURCE SAID HE WAS GENUINELY SURPRISED AT THE EXTENT OF DISAFFECTION OF THE POPULATION. EXECUTIONS HAVE BEEN WIDESPREAD TO THE POINT THAT ALMOST EVERY FAMILY HAS LOST AT LEAST ONE MEMBER. HE SAID MANY OF THE "OLD" KC HAVE BEEN SHOCKED BY THE EXECUTIONS, AND SOME HAVE FLED TO HIDE IN BORDER AREAS. IT IS "NEW" KC WHO TAKE THEIR ORDERS DIRECTLY FROM THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT WHO CONDUCT THE EXECUTIONS; SIN SAID THESE ARE HARD INDIVIDUALS CARRYING OUT HARSH ORDERS. (OUR SOURCE CONSISTENTLY CITED IENG SARY AS THE OFFICIAL DISPATCHING THE ORDERS ON BEHALF OF THE CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT.)

4. RESISTANCE. SIN CLAIMED THAT THERE ARE NOW 10,000 EX-GKR SOLDIERS AND OTHERS LIVING IN SMALL GROUPS IN HEAVILY FORESTED AREAS ALONG THE CAMBODIAN-THAI BORDER FROM SOUTH OF POIPET OVER TO THE LAO-THAI-CAMBODIAN BORDER. HE SAID THEY EAT WHATEVER THEY CAN, INCLUDING WHAT THEY ARE ABLE TO OBTAIN FROM RAIDS ON KC RICE STORES. THIS SO-CALLED RESISTANCE IS VERY SHORT OF WEAPONS, PROCURING OF WHICH IS PERHAPS THEIR CHIEF AIM IN WAGING SCATTERED, SMALL GROUP ATTACKS ON KC FORCES. HE NOTED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT IT WAS SUCH A GROUP WHICH KILLED 17 KC MOVING IN TO TROUBLED TA PHRAYA DISTRICT IN EARLY NOVEMBER TO PURCHASE RICE, FOR WHICH THE RTG BLAMED FORMER PRIME MINISTER IN TAM (REF A). SIN ADDED THAT THE ATTACKERS SUCCEEDED ON THAT OCCASION IN CAPTURING TEN ADDITIONAL GUNS. THUS FAR, ATTACKS HAVE

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BEEN SMALL-SCALE AND ISOLATED IN ORDER NOT TO ATTRACT TOO GREAT INTEREST--AND RESPONSE--FROM IENG SARY AND THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. IN ADDITION, THE RESISTERS DO NOT WISH TO COMPLICATE THAI-CAMBODIAN RELATIONS AND BORDER PROBLEMS (NOR, PRESUMABLY, TO INVITE RETALIATION ON THEIR OWN PLACES OF REFUGE). SIN SAID THE GROUPS SCATTERED ALONG THE BORDER, ALTHOUGH IN NO SENSE OF THE TERM UNIFIED, DO "COMMUNICATE" WITH ONE ANOTHER AND SO HAVE A GENERAL IDEA OF

WHAT ACTIVITY IS OCCURRING.

5. PLANS. SIN'S OBJECT IN VISITING THE EMBASSY WAS TO TRANSMIT THE REQUEST OF THIS PARTICULAR GROUP OF RESISTANCE ORGANIZERS FOR GUNS OR, BARRING THAT, MONEY. HE SAID THE LEADERS ARE THINKING OF REVISING THEIR STRATEGY BY EQUIPPING WITH WEAPONS A TOTAL OF 2000 MEN SO AS TO BEGIN WAGING LARGER-SCALE ACTIONS. THESE WOULD OCCUR FARTHER INTO THE CAMBODIAN INTERIOR IN ORDER NOT TO INTERFERE WITH CAMBODIAN-THAI RELATIONS. SIN ADMITTED THAT HIS PEOPLE CONTINUE TO HEAR OF RESISTANCE ACTIVITY IN THE SOUTHWEST BUT HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO MAKE CONTACT WITH IT. HE CLAIMED THAT SO MANY PEOPLE HAVE BEEN ALIENATED BY THE KC INSIDE CAMBODIA THAT THERE WILL BE NO LACK OF POPULAR SUPPORT FOR THIS RESISTANCE ACTIVITY.

6. SUPPORT. EMBASSY OFFICER QUICKLY DISABUSED SIN OF ANY EXPECTATION OF RECEIVING USG SUPPORT FOR HIS VENTURES OR THOSE OF OTHERS. WE ASKED ABOUT THAI SUPPORT; HE INDICATED THAT THE RIGHT-WING GROUP, NAWAPHON, REJECTED HIS REQUEST FOR HELP, AND HE HAS NOT APPROACHED ANY OTHER GROUP. SIN SAID THAT WHETHER OR NOT HIS OUTFIT RECEIVES ANY FOREIGN SUPPORT, IT EXPECTS TO SUCCEED IN ITS TAKEOVER WITHIN TWO YEARS.

7. CT ACTIVITY. SIN SAID THAT, ON HIS MOST RECENT EXCURSION INTO CAMBODIA, HE ACTUALLY OBSERVED THAI NATIONALS AT A CT CAMP SOMEWHAT TO THE SOUTHWEST OF PRAH VIHEAR. THEY DID NOT QUITE KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF HIM, HE NOTED, AND HE GAVE THEM NO TIME TO FIND OUT. HE ALSO SAID THERE IS A CAMP ESTABLISHED AT AMPIL IN FAR NORTHWESTERN CAMBODIA, CLAIMING THAT THE THAI COMMUNISTS ARE ENLISTING INTO THEIR RANKS SOME CAMBODIAN YOUTHS.

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8. COMMENT. ALTHOUGH NOT EASY TO EVALUATE, THIS REPORT IS OF INTEREST BECAUSE IT APPEARS TO REPRESENT AT LEAST A PARTIAL EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNT OF CONDITIONS INSIDE CAMBODIA TODAY. WE SUSPECT HIS CLAIMS OF PERSONS HIDING IN THE UNPOPULATED, THICKLY FORESTED BORDER AREAS HAVE SOME VALIDITY, ALTHOUGH NOT IN NUMBERS AS LARGE AS THOSE HE CITED. IN ANY CASE, WE CONSIDER IT UNLIKELY THAT THESE PEOPLE WILL BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE VERY MUCH UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS.

9. SEE REF B FOR DESCRIPTION OF APPROACH MADE TO DAO FOR CAMBODIAN RESISTANCE SUPPORT.
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